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SURVEY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS IN FIELD OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION, INCLUDING NEW MEDIA IN EDUCATION. FINAL REPORT.

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THE SUBSCRIBERS TO FOUR JOURNALS IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION WERE SURVEYED TO DETERMINE (1) WHETHER COMMUNICATION HAS EMERGED AS AN IDENTIFIABLE AREA OF DISCIPLINE, (2) WHAT SHORTCOMINGS READERS PERCEIVE IN PROFESSIONALLY SIGNIFICANT JOURNALS, AND (3) HOW READERS PERCEIVE THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS AS A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION. A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS SENT TO A SAMPLE OF THE JOURNALS' DOMESTIC SUBSCRIBERS, TO DETERMINE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBSCRIBER AND HIS REACTION TO THE JOURNALS HE CONSIDERED PROFESSIONALLY MOST SIGNIFICANT. DIFFERENCES WERE TESTED FOR SIGNIFICANCE BY CHI-SQUARE CONTINGENCY ANALYSIS AND BY THE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TWO-TAILED TEST. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY WERE--(1) SPECIALIZED FIELDS OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST TEND TO INHIBIT THE EMERGENCE OF A UNIFYING DISCIPLINE OF COMMUNICATION. (2) THERE ARE GAPS BETWEEN CONTENT RELEVANCE AND LEVEL OF DISCOURSE OF THE JOURNALS AND THE INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE READERS. (3) ALTHOUGH THE READERS OF THE JOURNALS ARE PREDISPOSED TOWARD ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP, THIS DOES NOT JUSTIFY EDITORIAL DETACHMENT FROM THE WORLD IN WHICH THE READERS WORK. SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WERE ALSO FOUND AMONG THE JOURNALS IN TERMS OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBSCRIBERS, THE PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND INVOLVEMENT OF SUBSCRIBERS, AND THEIR REACTIONS TO PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS IN GENERAL. (CM)

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February, 1967

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Bureau of Research

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I. INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

During recent years, research has accelerated in the study of information exchange among scientists of varying disciplinary complexions and institutional affiliations. (7) In contrast, a poverty of research effort exists in the area of readership studies of professional journals which serve the informational needs of a much wider professional audience than that of scientists.

A communications gap between scholars in the fields of the humanities and the sciences has been widely recognized. A similar or even greater communications gap between scholars and the "general public" has also attracted considerable attention. However, a communications gap between scholars and practicing members of professions who are consumers but not producers of scholarship and research has not attracted the same amount of attention.

An exception to this is found in studies in innovation. (6) In innovation research, the emphasis has been on stages, roles, and agency in the process of diffusion of ideas and practices; i.e., on the larger problem which Lasswell has identified as "equivalent enlightenment". (2) By equivalent enlightenment Lasswell means the sharing between the elite and non-elite of broad outlines of knowledge, if not complex technical details, essential to informed and intelligent social action.

The study reported here is an attempt to deal with one aspect of equivalent enlightenment in the area generally referred to as public communication, i.e., communication involving technological mediation of message transmission between the source and the receiver of the message. Specifically, it is a survey of reader characteristics, including value structure, leisure reading, professional involvement, and institutional affiliation, and the reactions of readers to the four leading journals in the field of public communication. The journals included in this study are AV Communication Review, The Journal of Communication, Journalism Quarterly, and Public Opinion Quarterly.

Definitions

A professional journal is any periodical devoted to the dissemination of information of direct interest to members of any field of human activity recognized as a profession, i.e., an occupation requiring special skills, an extended period of training, high social status, a code of ethics, an organization, and a regularly issued publication.

Within this definition, categorization of professional journals as "academic" or "trade" introduces difficulties that are sometimes insurmountable. For the purposes of this study it is only necessary to invoke the category of "scholarly-research" journals, thus automatically creating a huge basket for "all others".

The primary purpose of a scholarly-research journal is intellectual enlightenment. In rhetorical style, it is generally abstract, objective, and unemotional. Its posture is more one of detachment than of involvement; and its content consists largely of theoretical developments, research reports, trend analyses, dialogue on controversial issues, and critical reviews of significant books. The impression of dullness associated with scholarly-research journals derives from extensive use of jargon, the impersonal pronoun, the passive voice, esoteric quantifications, and a tendency to magnify the trivial without justifying it in terms of a larger problem.

Public communication involves the media of the press, radio, motion pictures and their variants, and/or television. Programmed instruction, computerized instruction, and other technological developments introduced into education are included in public communication. They involve intervening media in their simulation of interpersonal teacher-student relationships.

Criteria of Selection of Journals

The four journals included in this survey satisfy four criteria of selection: (1) official status as a publication of a professional association; (2) breadth of content to include research and scholarly discourse but not limited to either; (3) representativeness of a broad area of social and institutional activity often involving cross- or multi-disciplinary approaches; and (4) high incidence of inclusion of abstracts in standard social science reference tools (e.g., Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, etc.).

Instrumentation: The Questionnaire

The most practical means of access to journal readership is a questionnaire circulated to a sample of journal subscribers.

Such a questionnaire was prepared, field tested by mail, revised, field tested again by personal interview, and again revised. The final version consisted of 26 items, printed in 8-page pamphlet form. A copy is included in the Appendix of this report.

A covering letter was mailed with each of the 1801 questionnaires on February 8, 1966. Four weeks later a follow-up letter was sent to all who had not responded by that time. In deference to their right to be let alone after the second request for response, no further attempt was made to solicit information from those who did not respond to the first or second request.

The Universe and the Sample

Subscription lists to the four selected journals were graciously provided by the editor or business manager of each journal. These lists constitute the universe. By deleting all addressees living outside the 50 states and all impersonal addresses (Librarian, Editor, Superintendent of Schools, etc.), the universe of 12,034 was reduced to a workable frame of 5,813. From this frame a systematic proportional sample of 1,801 subscribers was drawn after random entry into each list. This sampling process and its resulting response rate are represented in Table 1.

Table 1. SAMPLE AND RESPONSE RATE

Journal	Universe	Frame	Sample	Response Rate
AVCR	4,492	2,450	758	64%
JC	1,086	595	184	66%
JQ	2,803	1,495	466	60%
POQ	3,653	1,273	393	63%
Total	12,034	5,813	1,801	63%

A total of 1,114 usable questionnaires were returned by the time the survey was closed to further responses. Later, 25 additional questionnaires trickled in but were not included in data tabulations and analyses.

Conceptual Model of Survey

Following McLuhan (4), the conceptual model of this survey is that readers are co-authors and co-editors who, in effect, create their own journals (archives of information) by reading selectively in each of the several journals to which they expose themselves. They do this in terms of their predispositions, their informational needs, and their criteria of excellence, relevance, and semantic noise.

This model may unintentionally do injustice to journal authors and editors. It is an output-input model which restricts accepted models of the flow of information but conforms to the actualities of information processing at the terminal node. All known innovations in information storage and retrieval are based on such an emerging concept of the primacy of the reader, i.e., the information seeker, in the communication system.

Major Objectives

The major objectives of the study were to determine:

(a) whether there is sufficient homogeneity of professional interest, educational level, and professional orientation among subscribers to these four journals to justify the inference that communication has already emerged as an identifiable area or discipline in its own right;

(b) how readers of these and various other journals perceive the role of professional journals as a channel of communication;

(c) what shortcomings readers perceive in professionally significant journals, and what changes they would like to see made in content, emphasis, authorship, and "scientific" or professional orientation of these journals.

II. RESULTS

Results of the survey are reported in terms of (a) characteristics of journal subscribers and (b) subscriber reaction to journals they consider professionally most significant. In the interests of brevity and succinctness, only those results which highlight each of these categories are included. Achieving this is akin to consummating Abraham's sacrifice. Tables are kept to a minimum. The style of reporting is as objective and abstract as possible, even though the author regards such characteristics as part of the modifiable mythology of research reporting. At the risk of violating prevailing canons of research reporting, effort is also made to indicate the rationale for variables where the rationale is not painfully obvious.

Readership Characteristics

Readership characteristics for which results are reported include: age, education, professional interests, social value structure, leisure reading, employing institutions, professional activities, involvement in scholarly activities, and organizational membership. The accumulated evidence provides readership profiles which, in turn, reveal clear implications for the receptivity of the messages transmitted by professional journals.

Age

Before reporting age distribution of subscribers to each of the four journals included in this survey, it is noted that over 80 percent of these subscribers are men. Journalism Quarterly has the highest proportion of women (18 percent) and the other journals have 12 percent or less. The world of these journals is a man's world. As shown in Table 2, POQ subscribers are significantly younger than subscribers to AVCR and JC; and JQ subscribers are significantly younger than AVCR subscribers. This suggests that the fields of journalism (JQ) and public opinion research and its related areas (POQ) are attracting more young people than the field of instructional media (AVCR) and the fields of speech, radio and television, theater arts, etc. (JC).

Education

The technical levels to which journals gear their articles and research reports are relatable in some degree to the level of higher education of their subscribers and other readers. Theoretically, higher levels of technical reporting of research and of abstract theoretical discussions of issues and theories in professional journals are more easily comprehended by readers with earned doctorates than by those with lower degrees.

Table 2. AGE DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENT

	Journal Subscribers			
Age	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
21-30	11%	15%	28%	22%
31-40	35%	26%	26%	41%
41-50	30%	34%	27%	25%
51-60	19%	18%	11%	9%
61	6%	8%	8%	4%
Total	101%	101%	100%	101%
N	468	116	269	242

POQ-JC $p < .001$
POQ-AVCR $p < .001$ (Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-tailed test)
JQ-AVCR $p < .001$

Since all four journals included in this survey are oriented toward the behavioral sciences, they emphasize quantitative data and statistical inferences. With the wide availability of computers, Parkinson's Law operates so that quantitative data are generated to fill computer time and capacity. The general availability of complex computer programs encourages the use of highly sophisticated data analyses, many of which are beyond the comprehension of readers not trained in advanced statistics. This irreversible trend creates a readership problem highlighted by the level of advanced degrees earned by journal subscribers.

Table 3. PERCENT OF HIGHEST EARNED DEGREES

Highest Earned	Journal Subscribers			
Degrees	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
AB/BS	17%	11%	25%	23%
AM/MS	56%	34%	53%	30%
PhD/EdD	26%	54%	21%	46%
Other (LlB,MD,etc.)	01%	02%	01%	01%
Total	100%	101%	100%	100%
N	424	104	229	221

Doctorate vs. Master's	JC-AVCR	$\chi^2 = 27.69$ $p < .001$
	JC-JQ	$\chi^2 = 28.13$ $p < .001$
	POQ-JQ	$\chi^2 = 36.31$ $p < .001$
	POQ-AVCR	$\chi^2 = 39.16$ $p < .001$

As shown in Table 3, not more than 54 percent of the subscribers to any one of these journals had an earned doctorate in 1965; and those with earned doctorates among subscribers to two of the journals do not exceed 26 percent. The differences in earned doctorates and earned master's degrees are highly significant ($p < .001$) between JC and both AVCR and JQ subscribers, and between POQ and both AVCR and JQ subscribers.

This trend indicates important differences in levels of higher education among the four journals. However, the educational level of all subscriber groups is rising. Twenty percent of the AVCR subscribers report that they are working beyond the MA degree toward the doctorate. A similar striving toward educational advancement is also reported by 17 percent of the JC group, 20 percent of the JQ group, and 14 percent of the POQ group.

Areas of Chief Professional Interests

As indicated in the introductory chapter, one of the underlying concerns of this survey is the extent to which communication appears to be an integrative force among subscribers to the four journals dealing with general or specific aspects of public communication, i.e., the extent to which a chief interest in a specialized area or discipline is superseded by the larger area of communication.

One way to attack this problem is to ask journal subscribers to check one or more of their chief professional interests on a list of interests likely to be found among such subscribers. Such a checklist yields two results: (1) the amount of expressed chief interest in communication as such, and (2) the amount and range of expressed interests in areas other than communication. These results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. AREAS OF CHIEF PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

Areas of Chief Interests	Journal Subscribers			
	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
Educational Media	83%	15%	06%	04%
Education	60%	24%	12%	04%
Communication	47%	90%	55%	44%
Journalism	04%	11%	89%	10%
Sociology	04%	18%	13%	50%
Psychology	16%	33%	10%	34%
Political Science	04%	06%	15%	27%
Business	07%	26%	10%	26%
Statistics	03%	08%	04%	21%
History	08%	09%	17%	02%
Speech	00%	21%	00%	00%

Table 4 shows that 83 percent of the AVCR subscribers have a chief interest in educational media, 89 percent of the JQ subscribers have a chief interest in journalism, and 90 percent of the JC subscribers have a chief interest in communication. However, the chief interests of POQ subscribers are widely dispersed. No more than 50 percent indicate a chief interest in any single field (sociology).

Underlying the specialized interests of subscriber groups is a substantial stratum of chief professional interest in communication. Among one of the subscriber groups (JC), communication is the highest priority interest--a fact that bears some relationship to JC as an official publication of the National Society for the Study of Communication. Among POQ and JQ subscribers communication has second priority as a chief professional interest, and among AVCR subscribers it has third priority.

This finding clearly suggests a widespread interest in communication among all four journal subscriber groups. The unanswered question is whether specialized interests are facets of a broad interest in communication, or whether communication is a facet of specialized interests in particular disciplines or areas of activity. Some light will be shed on this question in the discussion to follow.

Social Value Structure

Social values are centrally integrative of personality structure and behavior patterns and, consequently, important in a survey of reader characteristics and responses to professional journals.

The values used in this study are the familiar ones derived by Lasswell and mentioned variously in his writings. (3) In the questionnaire, each respondent was given a list of these values and a set of definitions:

Power: Ability to influence people and course of events.
Affection: Warmth of relations with other people.
Enlightenment: Insightfulness. Awareness of alternatives and consequences.
Respect: Distinction. High regard. Esteem.
Rectitude: Responsibility. Trustworthiness. Honesty.
Wealth: Ability to acquire desired goods and services.
Well-being: Mental and physical health. Freedom from anxiety.
Skill: Resourcefulness in task performance. Adroitness.

Respondents were asked to rank these eight values (from one through eight) in order of their importance.

All values are positive and essential to a balanced social order as well as to a balanced individual. This positive polarity of values complicates the choices of rank ordering. Also, value ranking involves ambiguities of referent--to the private or public self, to the self or others, to the achieved or the ideal, to reality or expectation. Despite preliminary doubts of the staff, the response rate was high. Only between 6 and 16 percent of the respondents among the various subscribing groups either omitted this item or miscoded the ranking.

To simplify an otherwise large volume of tabular data and statistical operations, results are reported in Table 5 in terms of mean rank for each value for each group of journal subscribers. Significant differences in rank ordering both within and between the subscribing groups were tested by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-tailed test. This test is sensitive to differences in central tendency, dispersion, skewness, etc.

By examining Table 5, it can be seen that several adjacently ranked mean values are highly similar, i.e., do not differ significantly. There are two important major exceptions to this. First, all four subscribing groups ranked power and wealth significantly lower ($p < .001$) in priority than all other values. Second, only two subscriber groups (the JC and the POQ subscribers) ranked enlightenment significantly higher than all other values at $p < .025$. Within the AVCR and the JQ subscribing groups, enlightenment does not differ significantly in high priority from rectitude.

Significant differences in value priorities among subscribing groups are found between POQ and AVCR subscribers. AVCR subscribers rank both rectitude ($p < .05$) and affection ($p < .001$) significantly higher than do POQ subscribers. The latter rank enlightenment ($p < .005$), respect ($p < .005$), and wealth ($p < .001$) higher than do AVCR subscribers. JC subscribers tend to rank affection higher than do POQ subscribers ($p < .10$) and tend to rank respect higher than do AVCR subscribers ($p < .10$).

AVCR and POQ subscribers thus differ significantly and importantly in their structure of basic social values. AVCR and JQ subscribers, on the other hand, are not significantly different in value structure; and JC subscribers tend to differ only slightly in value structure from both AVCR and POQ subscribers.

AVCR subscribers attach higher priority to the moral and social values of rectitude and affection than do POQ subscribers. In other words, they are more gracious people with whom to live and to work. POQ subscribers appear to be more status conscious than AVCR subscribers and to attach supreme value to intellectual competence.

Table 5. PRIORITY OF VALUES BY MEAN RANK

	Journal Subscribers							
	AVCR		JC		JQ		POQ	
Value	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Enlightenment	1	3.13	1	2.88	1	3.18	1	2.65
Rectitude	2	3.28	2	3.81	2	3.44	3	4.05
Skill	3	3.62	3.5	3.96	3	3.49	2	3.58
Affection	4	3.86	5	3.98	5	4.31	6	4.80
Well-being	5	4.05	3.5	3.96	4	4.09	5	4.35
Respect	6	4.72	6	4.31	6	4.66	4	4.29
Power	7	5.41	7	6.03	7	5.76	7	5.81
Wealth	8	7.11	8	7.06	8	7.07	8	6.55

National Magazine and Newspaper Reading

The pattern of leisure reading of national magazines and newspapers provides cues to the interests and intellectual activities of the subscribers to the four professional journals.

In the questionnaire a list of 29 magazines and newspapers (such as The New York Times) was provided with the request that respondents indicate by checkmark whether they read each of these regularly, occasionally, or seldom or never. Space was provided for writing in names of magazines not contained in the list.

In Table 6, magazines and national newspapers read regularly by 20 percent or more of any group of journal subscribers are listed. Certain patterns of reading behavior are evident from this table.

Table 6. MAGAZINES/NEWSPAPERS READ REGULARLY BY JOURNAL SUBSCRIBERS

MAGAZINES/ NEWSPAPERS	Journal Subscribers AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
Life	50%	34%	39%	25%
Time	42%	40%	50%	36%
Reader's Digest	38%	19%	19%	09%
National Geographic	36%	23%	24%	18%
Saturday Review	34%	40%	39%	26%
Newsweek	32%	21%	36%	28%
New York Times	28%	23%	38%	59%
Look	27%	18%	26%	15%
U.S.News & W. Report	21%	10%	18%	13%
TV Guide	17%	14%	18%	14%
Wall St. Journal	10%	20%	18%	19%
New Yorker	09%	13%	23%	30%
National Observer	09%	10%	22%	05%
Harper's	07%	20%	25%	17%
New Republic	04%	13%	15%	20%
N	478	119	270	240

A cue to a pattern of diversity of reading behavior among the journal subscribers comes with the finding, not shown in Table 6, that a total of 366 magazines were listed by 1114 respondents as read either regularly or occasionally. A second cue to diversity comes from the fact that, of the 186 Chi-square calculations on 2 x 2 tables, all but five showed significant differences between at least two groups of journal subscribers in relation to regular vs. seldom or never reading of the 31 most frequently listed maga-

zines. In the interest of sheer manageability, these tables and Chi-square values are omitted from this report.

Consistent patterns of regularity and avoidance emerge for AVCR and POQ subscribers. AVCR subscribers are more likely than all the other subscribing groups to read regularly rather than avoid Life ($p < .01$ or less), Reader's Digest ($p < .001$), and National Geographic ($p < .001$). They are also more likely ($p < .001$) than all other groups to avoid rather than read regularly Harper's, Wall Street Journal, and The New Republic.

POQ subscribers, on the other hand, are more likely than other subscriber groups to read regularly rather than to avoid The New Yorker ($p < .05$) and The New York Times ($p < .001$). They are also more likely than other subscribing groups to avoid rather than regularly read The Saturday Review ($p < .01$) and Reader's Digest ($p < .001$).

It is interesting that AVCR and POQ subscribers, who as groups differ from each other in value structure, differ also from all other groups of journal subscribers in their reading patterns. The difference appears to lie in the level of intellectual sophistication of the magazines and newspapers read regularly or avoided.

Employing Institutions

The institution by which the individual is employed provides the social and intellectual environment of the individual's professional activity and, theoretically at least, influences both his professional outlook and his professional information requirements. The percentages of journal subscribers employed by nine categories of institutions are shown in Table 7.

Two of these categories, broadcasting and research enterprise, are listed separately in recognition of the fact that they operate in more or less the same way wherever they are housed. A university owned broadcasting station operates in much the same way as a community owned educational radio or TV station; and a university research institute operates in much the same way as a private enterprise research institute or corporation, except for possible restrictions on publication in the open literature.

Colleges and universities are the largest employers, engaging 47 to 70 percent of the subscribers. The journal with the largest proportion of subscribers employed by institutions of higher education is JQ with 70 percent. That with the least is AVCR with 40 percent. In between are JC and POQ with 65 and 47 percent respectively.

Table 7. EMPLOYING INSTITUTIONS

	Percent of Journal Subscribers Employed			
Employers	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
College/University	40%	65%	70%	47%
School System	37%	03%	02%	00%
Broadcasting	02%	01%	00%	02%
Manufacturing, Sales, Advertising	06%	14%	04%	13%
Research Enterprise	03%	04%	02%	20%
Professional Association	02%	03%	00%	02%
Government	07%	04%	04%	05%
Publisher	00%	02%	11%	03%
Miscellaneous	04%	07%	09%	06%
N	479	119	268	239

The second largest employers, and those largely of AVCR subscribers, are the school systems--public, private, or religious. Some 37 percent of AVCR subscribers are employed by such systems (mostly public school systems). Very few, not exceeding three percent, of the other journal subscribers are employed by school systems.

The third largest employers are the research enterprises. Some 20 percent of the POQ subscribers are employed by research enterprises under governmental, university, or private ownership patronage. An insignificant percentage of other journal subscribers are employed by research enterprises.

Institutional diversity is evident in Table 7 both within and among the journal subscriber groups. This diversity complicates the task of journal authors and editors. Institutions tend to define unique informational requirements. Diversity of institutional affiliation then implies diversity of informational requirements.

Important Professional Activities

Primary professional roles of journal subscribers are indicated by those activities on which they spend the greatest amount of their time. Secondary roles are those on which individuals spend some time. Most of the respondents have both primary and secondary roles, but only primary roles are shown in Table 8.

As can be seen from this table, AVCR subscribers are primarily administrators; POQ subscribers are primarily researchers; and JC and JQ subscribers are primarily teachers (almost exclusively at the college or university level). The clear fact emerges that, with the exception of POQ subscribers, less than 30 percent of the subscribers to the scholarly-research journals included in this survey are primarily researchers.

Table 8. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES REQUIRING GREATEST AMOUNT OF TIME

Professional Activities	Journal Subscribers			
	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
Administration	66%	38%	33%	37%
Teaching	29%	62%	51%	29%
Consulting	20%	14%	06%	16%
Research	13%	29%	16%	65%
Committees	09%	02%	04%	04%
Writing/Speaking	08%	27%	23%	16%
Studying	11%	13%	22%	14%
N	473	118	268	242

Scholarship and Publication

Perhaps more representative of the level of scholarly activities of journal subscribers than the primacy of research as a professional activity are the percentage of subscribers reporting current engagement in research or other scholarly activities and the percentage reporting publication of one or more journal articles or books during the past three years. These are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLICATION

Journal Subscribers	Current Involvement in Scholarly Activities		Published Article(s) During Past Three Years	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
AVCR	466	47%	417	41%
JQ	264	61%	240	49%
JC	120	77%	112	63%
POQ	244	84%	226	57%

Table 9 shows that, for all four groups of journal subscribers, the rate of publication during the past three years is lower than the rate of current involvement in research and scholarly activities. Ascending order of publication rate among groups of journal subscribers is the same as the ascending order of scholarly activities, with the exception of POQ subscribers. The unexpectedly lower rate of article publication by POQ subscribers is possibly due to the fact that 20 percent are employed in research enterprises, most of which are commercial. In such cases, research activities are often "company confidential", i.e., reports are made to research sponsors but not always published in the open literature.

In scholarly activities, all differences are significant on 2 x 2 Chi-square tests on at least the $p < .01$ level except the difference between JC and POQ which is at the $p < .10$ level. By the same test, AVCR subscribers differed significantly in publications at the $p < .05$ level or less from all other subscriber groups, and JC subscribers differed significantly at the $p < .02$ level from JQ subscribers. POQ subscribers approached a significant difference from JQ subscribers at the $p < .10$ level. By both criteria, AVCR subscribers are the least involved in scholarly activities.

Membership in Professional Organizations

Professional organizations to which individuals belong are professional reference groups which may be considered as social dimensions of the individual. A reference group is any group of people with whom an individual identifies, whose objectives he accepts and whose rules of conduct constitute a set of norms.

The most impressive fact about organizational memberships of the four groups of journal subscribers is the total number of groups with which journal subscribers report affiliation. For example, the 471 responding AVCR subscribers report membership in a total of 740 different professional organizations. Of this 740, 544 were listed by only one respondent. Thus, patterns of dissensus and idiosyncrasy in organizational membership are clearly evident.

The dissensus pattern is also characteristic of the other journal subscribers. The 118 responding JC subscribers report belonging to 175 organizations, although the total number is probably larger since, in the interest of economy of effort, all state speech associations were tabulated under a single category. The 259 JQ respondents report membership in 273 organizations, and the 234 POQ respondents report 208.

Obviously, membership in professional organizations is greatly diffused within and among each of the four groups of journal subscribers. This membership diffusion indicates great diversity of reference groups, i.e., a great organizational dissensus in the broad field of public communication. The limited extent of consensus both within and among subscriber groups is clearly evident in the paucity of organizations to which approximately 15 percent or more of the responding subscribers to each of the four professional journals belong. This is shown in Table 10.

In the case of each of the groups of journal subscribers, the organization to which the highest percentage of subscribers belong is the organization of which the journal is an official publication. There is some question as to the accuracy of percentage of reported membership in the Department of Audiovisual Instruction by subscribers to AVCR, the only journal on which separate lists were

available for members who receive the journal as a function or option of membership and for subscribers who are not members of the Department. Of the responding sample of AVCR subscribers, 91 percent were listed as members of DAVI, yet only 75 percent reported such membership. It is interesting that the apparent error is in the direction of under-rather than over-representation of membership.

Table 10. ORGANIZATIONS WITH MORE THAN 15 PERCENT MEMBERSHIP

AVCR Subscribers (N = 471)

Organization	Percent Belonging
Department of Audiovisual Instruction (NEA)	74%
National Education Association	43%
Phi Delta Kappa	21%
National Association of Educational Broadcasters	18%

JC Subscribers (N = 118)

National Society for the Study of Communication	78%
Speech Association of America	46%
State Speech Associations	22%
Speech Association of the Central States	16%
American Association of University Professors	15%

JQ Subscribers (N = 259)

Association for Education in Journalism	65%
Sigma Delta Chi	45%
Kappa Tau Alpha	17%

POQ Subscribers (N = 238)

American Association for Public Opinion Research	52%
American Sociological Association	41%
American Marketing Association	26%
American Political Science Association	19%

As indicated in Table 10, reference groups of AVCR subscribers are clearly educational media and education oriented, for JC subscribers they are largely speech oriented, for JQ subscribers they are journalism oriented, and for POQ subscribers they are oriented toward public opinion, sociology, marketing and political science.

Reactions to Significant Journals

Responses of subscriber groups to journals they consider professionally most significant are reported under lists of such journals, articles considered to be especially useful or interesting, functions served by journals, weak points of journals, and suggestions for improvement, and technical level of readability of most articles.

Most Significant Professional Journals

All respondents were asked to list up to three journals they consider professionally most significant.

The dispersion pattern evident in magazine reading and organizational membership is also evident in the variety of significant journals listed by each group of subscribers. The 446 responding subscribers to AVCR listed a total of 247 different professionally significant journals. The 104 JC respondents listed 107 such journals; the 238 JQ respondents listed 126; and the 221 POQ respondents listed 107. This finding indicates that competition among professional journals for relevance and importance is widely distributed.

The lists of journals considered to be professionally most significant by 10 percent or more of each of the groups of journal subscribers are shown in Table 11. Data in Table 11 indicate (a) the limited consensus on significant journals within each group of subscribers, (b) the small amount of overlap of specific significant journals among the four groups of subscribers, and (c) the nature of significant journals in terms of subject matter or discipline and in terms of their scholarly or non-scholarly orientation.

With the exception of AVCR subscribers, each of the four subscriber groups achieved the greatest consensus on the significance of the journal selected for study in this survey. AVCR subscribers achieved the greatest consensus on the significance of Audiovisual Instruction with AVCR in second place.

The highest consensus (76 percent) on professional significance was achieved for Journalism Quarterly by the responding sample of its subscribers. All other journals included in this survey were considered among the three most significant professionally by from 45 to 51 percent.

Dominant professional interests are clearly evident among these lists of significant journals. As they do in their organizational membership, AVCR subscribers attach professional significance to journals dealing with educational media and education. JQ subscribers consider journals dealing with journalism as significant. JC subscribers attach significance to speech journals,

in addition to The Journal of Communication; and POQ subscribers attach significance to journals dealing with sociology, political science, marketing, and advertising in addition to POQ.

Table 11. JOURNALS CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT BY TEN PERCENT OR MORE OF SUBSCRIBER GROUPS

Significant Journals	Percent
AVCR Subscribers (N = 446)	
Audiovisual Instruction	57%
AV Communication Review	45%
Ed. Screen and AV Guide	18%
Phi Delta Kappan	14%
NEA Journal	11%
NAEB Journal	10%
JC Subscribers (N = 104)	
Journal of Communication	51%
Quarterly Journal of Speech	25%
Speech Monographs	23%
Speech Teacher	16%
JQ Subscribers (N = 238)	
Journalism Quarterly	76%
Editor & Publisher	25%
Columbia Journalism Review	23%
Quill	20%
Public Opinion Quarterly	16%
POQ Subscribers (N = 221)	
Public Opinion Quarterly	48%
American Sociological Review	27%
American Political Science Review	21%
Journal of Marketing Research	18%
American Journal of Sociology	18%
Journal of Advertising Research	14%
Journal of Marketing	13%

Journals in the POQ list are scholarly-research journals as are most of those in the JC list, but the AVCR and JQ lists are mixtures of scholarly and non-scholarly journals.

The only overlap of journals among these four lists involves Public Opinion Quarterly which is listed as significant by 16 percent of the JQ subscribers.

The pattern of limited consensus (except in the case of JQ subscribers) and widespread dissensus is clear-cut within each of these lists.

Recall of Useful or Interesting Articles

Respondents were asked to cite or describe two or three articles in recent journal reading that stood out as especially interesting or useful and to tell what there was about each article that made it vivid in memory. This task requires the exercise of discrimination between and evaluation of journal articles and a consequent articulation of the basis of evaluation. The purpose of the item is to obtain some indication of the impact of journal articles in terms of their importance and relevance to the reader. Results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. RECALL AND EVALUATION OF OUTSTANDING ARTICLES

	Journal Subscribers			
Nature of Response	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
Mention Article(s) with Comment	32%	39%	38%	37%
Mention Article(s) without Comment	16%	16%	14%	13%
Total Mentioning Articles	48%	55%	52%	50%
N	478	120	272	244

From this table, it is evident that only approximately 50 percent of any group of journal subscribers were able or willing to recall at least one article that was especially useful or interesting in recent journal reading. Between 22 and 30 percent did not attempt to answer the question. The remainder made vague responses to the effect that they liked certain issues of certain journals, or all the articles they read, or the book reviews, etc.

The problem of reactivity enters into this response pattern. It is possible that questionnaire fatigue and response resistance had set in by the time this question was reached. If so, reactivity was relatively constant among groups of journal subscribers. Another plausible interpretation is that approximately 50 percent of the respondents found no peak experiences in recent journal reading. The "news" in the journals was neither sufficiently relevant nor sufficiently important to provoke citation or comment by the reader.

Functions of Significant Journals

As indicated in Chapter I, the conceptual model of this survey is that readers, by selective reading, create their own journals. It follows from this model that individual readers invest their journals with various, often personalized functions. The unique perceptual response of each reader assumes more validity than the objective statements which he reads. In consequence, the usefulness or function of a professional journal depends more upon its subscribers' attitudes toward and manipulation of its contents than upon its objective text.

In the present study, subscriber responses indicated four modes of interpretation of functions - surveillance, inspiration, reinforcement, and discrimination - by which readers perceive and hopefully assimilate the diffuse material recorded in their professional journals. It is important to understand that these modes are not discrete or mutually exclusive. They are variables which appear in various changeable combinations for each subscriber.

The first and most common mode of journal usefulness (or function) is surveillance. Readers using this perceptual basis see journals as distributors of "news". Whether through research reports, essays, book reviews, news notes or abstracts, these readers perceive journals as information channels which keep them up-to-date in their general field of professional interest. Their response is at the level of awareness rather than at the level of canalized action.

Some readers also perceive journals as maps of action. They employ inspiration as a perceptual basis; and consequently, examine journals pragmatically in terms of professional stimulation and in terms of immediate professional utility of information. For them, journals indicate new ways (detailed and definitive) to solve familiar problems and new problems to which they can devote their professional selves.

In contrast to the pragmatic usage, a third function of journals is external reinforcement of personal attitudes, ideas, and activities. The effect of reinforcement is professional reassurance. Not surprisingly, some of those who specify reinforcement as a function seek companionship as well as confirmation. They identify with well-known authors, former teachers, etc., by associating themselves with the ideas and the attitudes of the famous and already established men in their field.

Finally, some journal readers use journals for the purpose of discrimination, i.e., they read professional publications in order to evaluate and sift information. They are interested in the significance of an event or concept and find strength in journals that reveal significance through debate and in-depth reporting.

These four functions, or modes of interpretation of usefulness, are categorizations of responses of subscribers to the question of the respects in which significant journals do best in meeting the professional needs of the reader.

Table 13. FUNCTIONS SERVED BY SIGNIFICANT JOURNALS

	Journal Subscribers							
Functions	AVCR		JC		JQ		POQ	
Surveillance	52%	45%*	34%	29%	50%	50%	48%	39%
Reinforcement	21%	18%	38%	33%	15%	13%	31%	25%
Inspiration	17%	14%	16%	13%	13%	11%	18%	14%
Discrimination	17%	15%	15%	13%	16%	13%	07%	06%
NA/NCA		14%		14%		15%		19%
N	412	478	103	120	231	272	198	244

*The left column represents percentages specifying various functions from among those who answered this particular item in the questionnaire; the right column represents percentages of functions specified by the total number of respondents.

The two functions indicated most frequently are those of surveillance and reinforcement, i.e., the news function of keeping subscribers up-to-date and "on-top" of their fields, and the confirmation function of reinforcing reader's conceptual approaches to problems.

It is interesting that both JC and POQ subscribers, both of whom are more active in current scholarly activities and publish more articles than AVCR and JQ subscribers, also list the reinforcement function more frequently than do the latter. No more than 15 percent of the total respondents list the inspiration or discrimination function of journals. This indicates that deeper levels of professional needs of readers, i.e., stimulation or redirection of ways of thinking and doing and discrimination of the significant from the insignificant are not well served by significant journals. If they are, the readers do not say so.

Weak Points of Significant Journals

From Table 13 above, it can be seen that between 81 and 86 percent of the respondents indicated positive contributions of significant professional journals. This indicates a high percentage of readers consider that their professional needs are well served

by significant journals. However, a high rate of response to the question of strong points (functions) is to be expected from the fact that journals referred to are among the three considered by their readers as professionally most significant.

Table 14. WEAK POINTS OF SIGNIFICANT JOURNALS

	Journal Subscribers							
Weak Points	AVCR		JC		JQ		POQ	
Insignificant Articles	47%*	22%	28%	19%	37%	24%	35%	21%
Overly Technical Articles	39%	18%	38%	26%	43%	28%	29%	18%
Narrow Perspective	25%	12%	28%	19%	12%	08%	18%	11%
Lack of Creativity	15%	07%	10%	07%	09%	06%	04%	02%
Poor Timing	08%	04%	11%	08%	05%	03%	11%	07%
Poor Writing	08%	04%	07%	05%	09%	06%	12%	07%
Irrelevance	08%	04%	06%	04%	10%	07%	09%	05%
No Answer or No Complaint		47%		33%		38%		40%
N	252	478	81	120	175	272	147	244

*As in Table 13, percentages in the first column under each journal represent proportions of those who responded to the item; and percentages in the second column represent proportions of the total number of respondents.

Table 14 graphically demonstrates that response rate for weak points of journals is quite different from response rate for journal benefits. Between 33 and 47 percent of the respondents either did not answer the item on weak points or indicated that they have no complaints about how significant journals serve their informational needs.

In rate of critical response to journal weaknesses, AVCR subscribers are significantly lower than JC and JQ subscribers at the $p < .01$ level and approach a significant difference from POQ subscribers at the $p < .10$ level. (Levels of significance were derived from 2 x 2 Chi-square tables.) From these data, it is clear that AVCR subscribers are the least critical, among all subscriber groups, of the journals they consider most significant professionally.

Of the various journal criticisms delineated in Table 14, two are most frequently expressed: (1) articles and research reports deal too frequently with the trivial and the insignificant; and (2) articles and research reports are too technical--ivory-towerish, unnecessarily obscure, and lacking in practical applications.

A respondent comment which epitomizes these two criticisms follows:

> I really don't know what the solution is, but it seems to me that an inordinate amount of the material is published because somebody wants it to be published, either for academic advancement or for other professional advancement. And since the editors are doubtless caught up in the same machine, the result is a tremendous amount of technique of breathtaking sophisticated nature, applied against problems so delimited as to be of minimal interest, and described in as "scientific" (meaning obscure) terms as possible. If anything, I would say that the articles, whether based on original research or purely on speculation, that deal with the concepts with which we have to approach our disciplines are much, much more interesting and valuable.

In light of the serenity of many readers toward their favorite professional journals, it is especially interesting that between approximately 18 and 28 percent of the responding sample of each group of journal subscribers expressed their discontent with either the amount of trivia reported or the technical level with which these trivia and more substantial content are presented.

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for improvements of professional journals were of such variety and occasionally so contradictory that they did not lend themselves to categorization and quantification.

However, a few themes tended to recur: the need for brief abstracts of articles to aid in selective reading; the need for more research summaries on various topics rather than for more discontinuous, fragmented reports; the need for more attractive physical format, better editing, and less emphasis on publication for publication's sake; the need for more controversy and dialogue on important issues; and the need for broad rather than narrow perspective in substantive areas.

The contradictions included; longer-shorter book reviews; more theory - less theory; more in-depth - more brief articles; more vigorous research - more daring research exploration with less stringent standards of rigor; more competent authors - less "in-group" selection of authors; etc. However, these contradictions may be more apparent than real since they deal for the most part with weight and balance of content, presentation, authorship, and research criteria.

Readability Levels of Significant Journals

The over-technical level of writing which drew forthright criticism from between 18 and 28 percent of the journal subscribers is considered within the communications model of this study to be a subjective evaluation by the reader rather than an objective attribute of the writing.

The last two items on the questionnaire were intended to provide a general indication of reader opinions concerning whether most of the articles in significant professional journals (a) are and (b) should be written so as to be understandable without highly technical training. Level of technical training was intentionally not defined in operational terms in the questionnaire. Instead, a judgmental reaction incorporating moods, feelings, and expectations of readers was sought. These, it is believed, are components of the subjective evaluation by the reader.

Prescriptive (should be) and normative (are) levels of readability of most articles in significant professional journals are shown in Table 15.

Table 15. GENERAL READABILITY OF SIGNIFICANT JOURNALS

	Journal Subscribers			
Not highly technical	AVCR	JC	JQ	POQ
Should be	78%	73%	83%	51%
Are	70%	47%	63%	29%
N	405	95	221	208
P	<.01	<.001	<.001	<.001

Although the two items on readability involved forced choices in order to avoid the obvious answer that journals differ in their intent and thus in the extent to which highly technical training is a legitimate requirement of readers, some respondents did insert this conditional response; but in no instance, did more than 10 percent of the respondents insert this or any other conditional response. All conditional responses were omitted from Table 15 since they beg the question asked.

As shown in Table 15, the normative level of non-technical readability is significantly lower than that of the prescriptive level for all groups of journal subscribers. Significance levels are based on 2 x 2 Chi-square tables of yes-no responses to the two items. Only AVCR and POQ subscribers differ significantly ($p < .01$) in disparity between the prescriptive level of the "should be" and the normative level of the "are".

The data in Table 15 are consistent with the data in Table 14 on weak points in significant journals in that both tables indicate readers' attitudes toward overly-technical articles.

There is little doubt that an element of dissatisfaction with overprofessionalization in significant professional journals as manifested in the level of technical writing and in the significance of substantive content exists among journal readers.

III. DISCUSSION

The generalizability of all findings of this survey is subject to four qualifications: (1) results are based on 63 percent of the sample; little is known about the 37 percent who did not respond except that (a) they did not respond, and (b) the proportion of non-response was constant for all groups who differed in other important characteristics; (2) the sample was drawn from lists of domestic journal subscribers who are not synonymous with the universe of readers; (3) due to proportional sampling, size of sample frame, and rate of response, responding sample size in all cases does not yield as high precision of estimate of the response of the universe as ideally desired; and (4) as in most surveys of the scope and detail of this study, results reported are selected from a larger repertory of tabulated and analyzed data. Decisions leading to each of these qualifications were made with knowledge of alternatives and consequences, and it is to be understood that these qualifications apply to all reported results and to all conclusions.

Consensus and Dissensus

The limited areas of consensus and the range of areas of dissensus both within and among the subscribing groups were not clearly anticipated when the survey was proposed and planned.

Consensus is the sharing of values, commitments, appreciations, and evaluations; and dissensus is their disparity or individuality. Shils regards dissensus as both a characteristic and a strength of mass society (10). To the extent that Shils' observations are valid, it is not logically surprising that dissensus would be characteristic among groups of adults professionally interested in some area of public communication; however, the extent of this dissensus is greater than expected.

Dissensus is manifest in value priorities, magazine reading, organizational memberships, and journals considered as professionally most significant. Some evidence that it is not limited to the broad field of public communication is found among the American Psychological Association's extensive studies of scientific information exchange (8). For example, among the responses of the 915 psychologists replying to a questionnaire item asking for a list of three books important to their recent scientific or professional work were listed 1004 different books. Of these 1004 books, 59 percent were listed by only one respondent, and only two books were cited by as many as 28 of the 915 respondents. This phenomenon is similar to that found in this survey among the lists of most significant professional journals.

It is difficult to reconcile the areas and extent of dissensus with the emergence of a strongly integrative discipline of communication suggested by the existence of a substantial stratum of chief professional interest in communication reported in Table 4. For that matter, it is not clear that today's academic disciplines are much more than unscaled territorial and cognitive maps of vested interests. Boundaries between disciplines have become less effective, although disciplinary cults endure. Fresh organizations of academic activity are problem centered - urban planning, regional science, etc.; and totally new "disciplines" are rapidly developing - computer science, information science, etc. More remarkably, professors of English literature have become social commentators; theologians have become social activists; and sculptors have become welders. These trends suggest that in the emerging world the traditional notion of autonomous academic disciplines may no longer be relevant.

Critical Docility and Intensity

While high percentages of all groups of journal subscribers are able and willing to specify the strong points or functions served by the journals they consider professionally most significant, lower percentages are able or willing to specify the weak points or dysfunctions. Evidently readers are, in general, more responsive to the strong points of their favorite professional journals than to their weak points. Either that, or some readers feel a kind of reverential and self-depreciating regard for their favorite journals, much like the attitude of the faithful toward the vestments of the episcopacy.

The fact remains, however, that between one-half and two-thirds of the responding sample of each subscriber group did specify weak points; and many of them did so in unmistakably strong language, i.e., their feelings on critical points are often intense. The words "crud" and "nit picking" did not often appear but each did appear in critical responses. Certain significant journals are said to "stand firmly with both feet off the ground". Among the specific weak points frequently mentioned are pedantry, the publish-or-perish syndrome, in-group bias, redundancy of the inconsequential, etc.

Predispositions toward Academic Scholarship

Research on reading, or rather interpretations of research on reading, emphasize the role of predispositions in selection of and response to what is read (11). In the field of public communication, Klapper's (1) reinforcement hypothesis, which rests on the force of predisposition, is widely accepted as a current policy of knowledge.

Accordingly, it is appropriate to speculate on the relationships of journal reader characteristics and response patterns to predispositions toward a kind of academic scholarship associated with the "scientific" orientation of highly respected and respectable journals in social science areas, including public communication.

"Our journals, books, and conferences," says Maslow, "are primarily suitable for the discussion of the rational, the abstract, the logical, the public, the impersonal, the nomothetic, the repeatable, the objective, the unemotional. They therefore assume the very things that we 'personal psychologists' are trying to change." (5)

Even a cursory examination of the findings of this survey suggest that professional journal readers are not totally predisposed to accept the array of attributes Maslow specifies as modifiable assumptions. The high priority assigned to rectitude as well as to enlightenment clearly suggests that a professional journal diet of rationality and high-order abstraction may be deprivational. Patterns of leisure reading suggest a reader need for variety in scope and orientation of reading and for hot as well as cool media. Variation in rate of self involvement in scholarly activities suggests a reader audience of information consumers-only as well as a reader audience of information consumers-producers. Large proportions of readers employed outside the insulating walls of the campus suggest a reader audience concerned with the implementation of theory and research rather than with its rewarding self-sufficiency.

The results of this study point to at least four interrelated editorial policy issues that journal editors and editorial boards need to recognize, confront, and resolve.

These issues apply most aptly to various scholarly-research journals. Underlying each of the issues stated below is the principal investigator's concern for the dissemination of the fruits of scholarship beyond the circle of scholars and researchers for whom scholarship and research are ends in themselves, objects of employment, and means toward mobility and security.

Paul Sears put it this way:

> It is the great destiny of human science, not to ease man's labors or prolong his life, noble as those ends may be, nor to serve the ends of power, but to enable man to walk upright, without fear, in a world which he at length will understand and which is his home. (9)

Critical Editorial Policy Issues

The four interrelated editorial policy issues that emerge more clearly from the data of this survey follow:

(1) How closely do prevailing editorial concepts of areas and levels of leadership approximate the readiness of readers to achieve editorial leadership aspirations?

(2) Do scholarly-research journals exist as specialized information channels primarily for researchers and scholars, or do they also exist as informational and educational channels for those who teach and learn and for those who implement knowledge at the operating level? If the latter, what redistribution of balance of substantive content, emphasis, and style of presentation is required?

(3) Are concepts and techniques reported in journals intrinsically so technical that they cannot be presented in understandable terms to the "lay" reader? Would more non-technical explication alienate an elite among the readers or seriously degrade the information reported? What purposes and at what cost does the formal discourse of professional journals serve better than the more informal discourse of interpersonal communication among scholars and other professionals?

(4) Do the editorial criteria of rigor of research design and statistical confidence levels reward discontinuity and triviality of conceptual contribution? Are intellectual daring and risk-taking being subjugated to academic respectability: if so, is academic respectability thereby vitalized or sterilized?

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Three conclusions may be drawn from the results of this survey:

(1) Specialized fields of professional interest tend to inhibit the emergence of a unifying discipline of communication.

(2) Gaps exist between the content relevance and the level of discourse of significant professional journals and the informational requirements of many of their readers.

(3) Distribution of indices of reader predispositions toward academic scholarship as a sufficient professional goal does not justify emphatic editorial detachment from the larger world of reality in which readers play out their professional roles.

Recommendations growing out of the results are implicit in the reported data and in the editorial policy issues raised at the conclusion of the preceding discussion chapter.

V. SUMMARY

This readership survey of a sample of subscribers to four leading scholarly-research journals in the field of public communication is intended to provide data and inferences in answer to three major questions:

(a) whether there is sufficient homogeneity of professional interest, educational level, and professional orientation among subscribers to these four journals to justify the inference that communication has already emerged as an identifiable area or discipline in its own right;

(b) how readers of these and various other journals perceive the role of professional journals as a channel of communication;

(c) what shortcomings readers perceive in professionally significant journals, and what changes they would like to see made in content, emphasis, authorship, and "scientific" or professional orientation of these journals.

Design and Instrumentation

The four journals included in this study are AV Communication Review (AVCR), The Journal of Communication (JC), Journalism Quarterly (JQ), and Public Opinion Quarterly (POQ). A 26-page questionnaire was mailed to a systematic, proportional sample of 1801 domestic subscribers. Response rate was 63 percent. Readership variables included in the questionnaire are those dealing with the professional person, his professional situation, his professional involvement, and his responses to professional journals. Differences were tested for significance by Chi-square contingency analysis and by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-tailed test.

Results

Personal Dimensions

Significant differences in age were found among subscriber groups. The educational level of all subscriber groups is rising, but in no instance do more than 54 percent have earned doctorates, and in two instances the percentage is less than 30. Communication as a chief professional interest is found in varying degrees among all subscriber groups, and greatest among JC subscribers. JQ subscribers are chiefly interested in journalism, and AVCR subscribers in educational media. POQ subscribers are discipline oriented in their chief interests - sociology, political science, and the business of advertising and marketing.

Analysis of the eight Lasswellian social values revealed significant differences between AVCR and POQ subscribers in the rank ordering of enlightenment, rectitude, affection, respect, and wealth. Only JC and POQ subscribers ranked enlightenment significantly higher than all other values.

AVCR and POQ subscribers differed from all other subscriber groups in regular reading and avoidance of magazines and national newspapers - the former favored Life, Reader's Digest, and National Geographic; and the latter The New York Times and The New Yorker.

Professional Situation

High percentages of JC and JQ subscribers are employed by colleges and universities. Approximately equal proportions of AVCR subscribers are employed by colleges and by school systems. Employing institutions of POQ subscribers are more diffuse - colleges, research organizations, and business enterprises.

Primary professional roles differ markedly among subscriber groups. A high proportion of AVCR subscribers are primarily engaged in administration. A similarly high proportion of POQ subscribers are primarily engaged in research. JC subscribers are primarily engaged in (college) teaching, as are JQ subscribers but to a lesser extent.

Professional Involvement

Involvement in scholarly and research activities varies widely among subscriber groups, as does rate of publication; but in the latter the variation is not as great. Consistent with the nature of their primary professional roles, their differences in patterns of magazine reading, and their differences in value structure, AVCR subscribers are least involved in scholarly activities (47 percent) and POQ are most involved (84 percent). JQ and JC lie in between.

Professional organization membership displays a pattern of (a) specialized occupational interests, (b) limited consensus, (c) unsuspected diversity or dissensus of organizations to which subscribers belong, and (d) little overlap between subscriber groups.

With the exception of one subscriber group, the number of different professional organizations belonged to exceeds the number of respondents. In contrast to this diversity, the number of different organizations to which at least 15 percent of the respondents belong does not exceed five. These few "consensual" organizations reflect the educational and media interests of AVCR subscribers, the communication and speech interests of JC subscribers, the journalism interests of JQ subscribers, and the

disciplinary and research interests of POQ subscribers. Among these "consensual" organizations there is no overlap between subscriber groups included in this study.

Reactions to Professional Journals

Journals considered as among the three most significant professionally show a pattern very similar to that of organizational membership - limited consensus, selection by professional specialization, extensive disparity or dissensus, and little overlap between subscriber groups.

Not more than seven journals were listed by more than 10 percent of any subscriber group as among those they considered professionally most significant.

The highest subscriber consensus was found for Journalism Quarterly, which was listed by 76 percent of the JQ respondents as the journal they considered professionally most significant. The other three journals (AVCR, JC, and POQ) were so listed by between 45 and 51 percent of their subscriber groups. AVCR subscribers listed Audiovisual Instruction in greatest percentage (57 percent) and AVCR in second place (45 percent). AVCR was the only scholarly-research journal not listed as most significant by the highest percentage of its subscribers.

Only between 48 and 55 percent of the respondents could or would list at least one article in their recent journal reading that stood out as especially useful or interesting and only between 32 and 39 percent could or would comment as to why its memory was vivid. Apparently, for approximately half the journal subscribers in the responding sample, their diet in journal reading is bland; and their journal reading appears relatively free of peak experiences.

As readers report it, the two major functions that significant professional journals serve are the surveillance or news function and the reinforcement or confirmation function. Significant journals keep readers up-to-date and "on top" of their fields at the level of awareness, and theyreassure their readers through confirmation of the stability of their perceptual structure. To a much lesser extent, journals function at the deeper and more difficult levels of stimulating and redirecting patterns of thought and action and of clearly discriminating the significant from the insignificant.

Journals thus appear to fulfill a primordial urge to know and an equally understandable human need for conceptual and perceptual stability. Apparently, journals are less influential in

separating the wheat from the chaff in the harvest of scholarship and in restructuring reader perception of and commitment to a world in process of rapid social and technological upheaval.

These sweeping and disturbing inferences are supported, in part, by the list of categories of weak points readers see in significant journals: too many articles and research reports dealing with trivial and insignificant problems, and an overly-technical level of discourse in which problems and research are reported. In every group of subscribers, there is a significant difference between the prescriptive and normative levels of discourse.

Levels of critical docility vary among journal subscribers. Between one-third and one-half of the responding samples either have no complaints or do not express them. In this phenomenon of contentment or of reluctance to express criticism, AVCR subscribers exceed each of the other subscriber groups. With the journals as they presently exist, whatever the critics may lack in numbers, they compensate for in the intensity of their criticism. The questionnaire item on weak points apparently touched raw nerves of reader discontent with inflation in professional journals of the inconsequential and with breathtaking sophistication and obscurity.

Editorial Policy Issues

On the basis of the data on subscriber characteristics, perceptions, and reactions, it is apparent that those who occupy difficult and often thankless roles on the editorial boards of a professional journal must confront and resolve a series of interrelated editorial policy issues. Four such issues emerge from the data of this survey:

(1) How closely do prevailing editorial concepts of areas and levels of leadership approximate the readiness of readers to achieve editorial leadership aspirations?

(2) Do scholarly-research journals exist as specialized information channels for researchers and scholars, or do they also exist as informational and educational channels for those who teach and learn and for those who implement knowledge at the operating level? If the latter, what redistribution of balance of substantive content, emphasis, and style of presentation is required?

(3) Are concepts and techniques reported in journals intrinsically so technical that they cannot be presented in understandable terms to the "lay" reader? Would more non-technical explication alienate an elite among the readers or seriously degrade the informa-

tion reported? What purposes and at what cost does the formal discourse of professional journals serve better than the more informal discourse of interpersonal communication among scholars and other professionals?

(4) Do the editorial criteria of rigor of research design and statistical confidence levels reward discontinuity and triviality of conceptual contribution? Are intellectual daring and risk-taking being subjugated to academic respectability; if so, is academic respectability thereby vitalized or sterilized?

Conclusions

Three conclusions may be drawn from the results of this survey:

(1) Specialized fields of professional interest tend to inhibit the emergence of a unifying discipline of communication.

(2) Gaps exist between the content relevance and the level of discourse of significant professional journals and the informational requirements of many of their readers.

(3) Distribution of indices of reader predispositions toward academic scholarship as a sufficient professional goal does not justify emphatic editorial detachment from the larger world of reality in which readers play out their professional roles.

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APPENDIX A

(Questionnaire Form)

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
THE INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATIVE RESEARCH
3634 WALNUT STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19104

Advanced Media Study

No. _____

1. What is your sex:
   _____ Male
   _____ Female

2. What is your age:
   _____ Under 21
   _____ 21-30
   _____ 31-40
   _____ 41-50
   _____ 51-60
   _____ Over 60

   GO TO QUESTION 3 AT TOP OF RIGHT COLUMN.

3. What degrees do you have now or expect to have soon? In what field of study?

Degree	*Year Obtained or Expected*	*Field of Study*
AB/BS	_____	_____
AM/MS	_____	_____
PhD/EdD	_____	_____

4. Are you presently or have you during the past year been enrolled in any course(s) or seminar(s)?
   _____ Yes _____ No
   IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 6.

5. If yes, were you assigned to read any articles in professional journals?
   _____ Yes _____ No

6. Who is your principal employer? Where? What is the title or academic rank of your position?

   Employer's Name: _____

   Location: _____
   City *State*

   Title or Academic Rank: _____

7. Have you any research, critical analyses, position papers, or studies of any kind in progress?

   _____ Yes _____ No
   IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 12.

8. What is the subject of this study?

   _____

9. Do you intend to submit an article on this study for publication in a professional journal?

   _____ Yes _____ No
   IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 11.

10. **Please list your choice of journals to which you intend to submit the article for publication.**

First choice of journal: _____

Second choice of journal: _____

Third choice of journal: _____

NOW SKIP TO QUESTION 12.

11. **If you do not intend to submit an article on your study to a journal for publication, what other plans do you have for disseminating your findings?**

_____

_____

12. **Your professional interest is chiefly in: (Check one or more as appropriate)**

____ Psychology	____ Educational Media	____ Chemistry	____ English
____ Libraries	____ Political Science	____ Sociology	____ Physics
____ Anthropology	____ Communication	____ Engineering	____ Education
____ Mathematics	____ Foreign Languages	____ Philosophy	____ Biology
____ Business	____ Economics	____ Statistics	____ History

____ Journalism Other: (Please specify) _____

13. **To what professional organizations do you belong on the local, state, regional, or national level? Do you hold any office(s) or serve on any committee(s) of any of these organizations? Have you attended any convention(s) during the past three years? Have you presented any talk(s), read any paper(s), or participated in any seminar(s) at any of these conventions during the past three years?**

Name of Organization (Please spell out)	*Hold Office or Serve on Committee*		*Attended Convention*		*Made Presentation*	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____	____

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, PLEASE USE BACK OF LAST PAGE.

14. Please indicate the amount of time you spend on each of the following professional activities. Mark those activities on which you spend the greatest amount of time with two checks, those on which you spend lesser time with one check, and those on which you spend little or no time with 0.

Amount Time

_____ *Administration:* running a department, supervising personnel, etc.

_____ *Teaching:* regular classes, workshops, special or extension courses.

_____ *Consulting:* with outside organizations or people.

_____ *Research and Research Guidance:* individual or group.

_____ *Committees:* local, state, regional, or national.

_____ *Writing and/or speech-making:* local, state, regional, or national.

_____ *Studying:* for courses or seminars.

_____ *Other:* (Please specify) _____

15. Now consider each of the activities above. Which of them puts the greatest demand on you to gather and utilize scholarly or scientific information? (Please write the activity.) If none require scholarly or scientific information, write 0.

_____

16. Please rank each of these social values in order of its importance *to you*, using number 1 for the most important, number 2 for the next most important, etc. In ranking these values, please use the definitions given below.

Rank *Value*

_____ *Power:* Ability to influence people and course of events.

_____ *Affection:* Warmth of relations with other people.

_____ *Enlightenment:* Insightfulness. Awareness of alternatives and consequences.

_____ *Respect:* Distinction. High regard. Esteem.

_____ *Rectitude:* Responsibility. Trustworthiness. Honesty.

_____ *Wealth:* Ability to acquire desired goods and services.

_____ *Well-being:* Mental and physical health. Freedom from anxiety.

_____ *Skill:* Resourcefulness in task performance. Adroitness.

17. Please indicate which of the following general interest magazines or newspapers you read regularly, occasionally, or seldom or never.

Magazine or Newspaper	*Read*		
	Regularly	*Occasionally*	*Seldom or Never*
Atlantic			
Better Homes and Gardens			
Business Week			
Christian Science Monitor			
Esquire			
Fortune			
Harpers			
Holiday			
House Beautiful			
Ladies Home Journal			
Life			
Look			
Nation			
National Geographic			
National Observer			
National Review			
New Republic			
Newsweek			
New Yorker			
New York Times			
Playboy			
Readers Digest			
Saturday Review			
Sports Illustrated			
Time			
TV Guide			
U. S. News & World Report			
Vogue			
Wall Street Journal			
Others:			

18. **What scholarly or professional journals do you read regularly or occasionally? To which do you subscribe? Please indicate whether you have published anything in any of these journals during the past three years.**

Name of Journal (Please spell out)	*Read*		*Subscribe To*		*Published In*	
	Reg.	*Occas.*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, PLEASE USE BACK OF LAST PAGE.

19. **If you have published in any of the above journals, or in *any other* publication, during the *past three years*, what is the title(s) of your article(s)? Please also list name of publication.**

Title of Article	*Where Published*

20. **Among the journals you read regularly, select as many as three which are most significant to you professionally. Please list these below in rank order of significance, using the number 1 to indicate the most significant, the number 2 the next most significant, etc.**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

21. **In what respects do you think these significant journals do best in meeting your professional needs? What do you like most about them?**

22. **In what respects do you think these significant journals do least well in meeting your professional needs? What do you like least about them?**

23. In your recent journal reading, which two or three articles or other features stand out as especially interesting or useful? If you can remember the authors and titles, please list them. If not, describe the articles in your own words. Then tell what there is about each article that makes it vivid in your memory. If you remember none, please say so.

24. What suggestions do you have for improving the journals you consider most significant professionally? (Any subject you would like included, or emphasized more? What about writing style, format, etc.? What about news notes? Theory? Controversy? Research summaries? Book reviews? Etc.?)

25. Do you think that *most* of the articles in the journals you consider significant are written so they can be understood by people without highly technical training?

_____ Yes _____ No

26. Do you think that most of them should be so written?

_____ Yes _____ No

THANK YOU